

Honey Badger in Battle with Black-backed Jackals

Upon investigating a cloud of dust a few metres from the road, we encountered a single Honey Badger in combat with a Black-backed Jackal, while four other jackals were rushing in and nipping the badger on its rump. All the jackals were yapping and baring their teeth, while the badger made a harsh rattling call. The Honey Badger retreated into a burrow, but as soon as the jackals trotted away, the aggressive badger emerged and rushed at them once more. The five-on-one battle then repeated itself, until the stocky carnivore finally backed off into the hole. We watched the combat for about five minutes, surprised at why these normally nocturnal animals were active on such a hot mid-morning in November.

Brandon de Beer

Elephants Prevent Wild Dog from Killing Waterbuck

A pack of five Wild Dog (the New Madikwe Pack) were seen to chase a female Waterbuck and her calf towards Tholo Dam. As is typical for these antelope, they headed into the water when pursued, and the mother and calf paused about 8m from the bank, looking back at the dogs. The dogs headed straight towards the water themselves, only to be chased off by two large African Elephant bulls drinking nearby. The elephants kept the eager dogs away from the water for about half an hour and the pack soon tired and wandered off. After about an hour the Waterbuck emerged from the water and walked away.

Jason Trollip

White Rhino Calf is Bullied by Male, but Defended by its Mother

On 24 November, we came upon three White Rhino - an adult male, and an adult female with a juvenile - standing together on a sand road. The male was seemingly intent on mating with the female and proceeded to chase the youngster away, but after running off for about 50m it quickly returned to its mother's side. After about 15 minutes of chasing, the male rhino became very aggressive and put its horn under the juvenile's groin to lift it up onto its front feet and then bowl it over onto the ground. Once down, the calf was then rolled over and over for about 3m. The female promptly attacked the male rhino, cutting his face below the eye with a blow from her horn, but the male responded by striking out and cutting the female below the neck. A stand-off ensued and none of the rhinos appeared to be badly injured when we left the scene after about 20 minutes.

James Gradwell

Comments to Madikwe Butterfly List

In response to the article 'A Checklist of Butterflies and their Larval Food Plants at Madikwe' by Heidi Muller in the *CCA Ecological Journal* 1, I have the following comments:

Firstly, the list is based on my own work at Madikwe and the inclusion of specific taxa which I did not identify to species level is questionable. Secondly, the existence of the lycaenid *Argyraspodes argyraspis* is questionable and a specimen or photograph would be required to verify its existence at Madikwe.

Finally, the list of larval food plants includes some very unlikely associations (based on the knowledge of certain butterflies) and it should be noted that oviposition records, though not entirely reliable, are the absolute minimum required to confirm this.

Mark Williams

